Etiologic and diagnostic workup in transient ischemic attack and ischaemic stroke in young adults

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Abstract

The incidence of ischaemic stroke and transient ischaemic attack (TIA) in young adults is increasing, and this implies a great early death risk compared with the general population. A wide range of different etiologies is found in this group, and a careful anamnesis, physical examination and workup is essential for its diagnosis and proper management. Standard risk factors are still prevalent in this age group, and they should be considered in the initial evaluation. Special emphasis should be given to cervical artery dissection, right-to-left shunts and hypercoagulable states in young stroke patients. A wide variety of rarer causes should also be considered when the remainder of the workup is negative.

In this protocol, we propose a methodical diagnostic approach to TIA and ischaemic stroke in young adults.